

Miss A. W. Weston.

185-1

July 20th 1855

Ms. A. 9.2.25.99A

Don't mind how long it is before you write
to me. I can wait ^{patiently} till Bazaar duties are
recovered from. Please to recognize Anna
Thomas as the ostensible official
person in connection
with the Bristol
things.

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bewildered & misled by the transatlantic proslavery
divines; & many are beginning to see thro' them now. Still
the heads of these denominations, like those of every other
^{in America} side with the predominating power, & when antislavery
is pressed home to them as a church question they are
apologetic enough in re-enacting the performances
of the American Clergy, silencing all discussion &
deprecating all "quarrellings," unchristian denunciations
"uncharitable judgments," contentious spirits, &c.
the like. We are doing our utmost to establish the
principle that the people who profess to be antislavery
while deploring & avoiding "controversy" & brook talks
of the "mischief done to the Cause" by driving away
the religious portions of the community; - thro' boldly
meeting the proslavery barriers which are erected for
sectarian protections, - are wolves in sheep's clothing;
& though a great many lukewarm friends have been
frightened off the stage, ^{by this doctrine} it enables those who recover
from the first shock better to appreciate the nature
of your struggles & the causes of your extreme jealousy
& distrust of "clerical abolitionism." Edward Mathew
whom your family & Mr. Thompson saw fit to brand
(with the titles of "snake" creature with a new organi-
zation instinct; "mean," "blind," unbaptised with
the abolition spirit" &c. &c. from suspicious drawn
from past experiences, but which I never could
accept as evidences of ^{his} treachery). This much abused
man is doing a most important work in this
direction; I wish you knew how important, how
much needed, & how susceptible of being turned to your
account it is, for then you would understand our
estimating him so much more highly than our
comparisons would admit he deserved to be. ^{to think}

The abuse of all religious organizations by their pro-slavery members has made your sisters look with entire distrust on any antislavery manifestation made in connection with them; & that, in addition to this, the clearness of their own perceptions & the extent & rapidity of their own penetration, as well as the extent of their own field of observation makes them often attribute moral obliquity to those whose failures in arriving at their standard are really attributable to confused intellects, dulness of apprehension, limited capacities, & scanty opportunities of observation & mental cultivation. They could not at any rate comprehend what seemed perfectly explicable to ^{in E. Matthews' pamphlet} ~~us~~ ^{without} ~~us~~ ^{any} want of integrity, in ~~E. Matthews~~. Contact with numerous classes of minds much less informed than our own on Antislavery politics, enable us perhaps to view them from the "stand point" of an ^{undrugged} ~~uneducated~~ ^{more accusatory} Baptist Minister, than is possible for Mrs. Chapman or Miss Weston, or Mr. Thompson. Mr. Webb too took the same view of E. M. as ourselves, & certainly as far as events have since developed his course we were not mistaken. His absorbing desire seems to be, to purify the Baptist Church from slavery; he takes the most decided "come outer" stand, maintaining that the Churches are the bulwarks of the system declares that if one extensive denomination were once brought to throw its weight into the opposite scale the others must follow & slavery die. This doctrine he considers it his mission to bring into notice in season & out of season, the Society to which he belongs is based upon it, & after the closest scrutiny we are convinced that he makes this Free Baptist Free Mission ^{Soc^y} a vehicle for ^{diffusing} antislavery light & does not in any respect render the cause subservient to any sectarian purposes. He would with other words have run in the face of the very parties whose sympathies

it was all important to his success as a delegate
from a Missionary body, to enlist. He joins the
Evangelical Alliance which has so damaged the
Cause in America, crops his track here & with his
eyes wide open to the ruin such a course would
be to his prospects of collecting funds for his
Free Mission objects, he daringly assails this
Slaveholder's shield, & brings the storm of all
"Evangelical Christendom" with upon his head.
You will I know be amused with the newspaper
report of the meeting he has just held here, the
scene was most exciting, the minister (Mr. Davis)
who so disgraced himself at it & who has been & still
is industriously undermining S. Matthews by all
sorts of false reports & underhand conduct, was
an antagonist of Miss Weston's for a while & living
here. His elaborate panegyric on himself for
his Anti-slavery character, which vainly aimed
to cloak over his Pro-slavery deeds, is a specimen
of what you must be very familiar with, ^{but} ~~but~~
it is a great help to us to be able to point ^{such} to it.
Illustration of the New organization enemies you
have to deal with. My Father has I find been
writing to Mr. May in reference to this same Ed.
Matthews of whom you must be quite wearied;
so I will spare you the remainder of my tedious
& apparently uncalled for essay. I only trouble
you with it from an anxiety to prevent your
expecting more from us English sympathisers
than we shall ever be able to offer, or thinking

better things of us than we deserve. You know genuine
thoroughgoing Antislavery is a hot house plant, with
us, & perfect specimens are very rare; & that of the
number who are susceptible of cultivation, some are
uninformed & prejudiced, ^{others} are clear sighted
too indifferent to be stimulated to action without
great coaxing. So we must have a practical channel
in which to direct any sympathy we may enlist;
(with the exception of ^{working for} the Boston Bazaar, which
too ^{mechanical} ~~material~~ to keep up a continuous vitality) the
church question is ^{the} strongest hold, & the most
direct & intelligible for individual or associated
application. We shall be very grateful to you for
suggestions of any other modes of keeping people
at work; - people I mean of average capacity & cul-
tivation & limited resources & leisure. Those
who can write newspaper articles &c. ^{would be} no
difficulty ^{to find suitable employment} ^{such} ^{as} ^{is} of more readers, writers, &
selectors for the press, ^{the} ^{papers} in which to pub-
lish our intelligence. I am laboring to stimulate
the dissatisfied portion of the community to start
some such organ; but until our celebrated man-
ifesto has been circulated, & we have heard how
for our complaints of the Broad Street Society are
expressions of the general sentiment, we shall not
know how the proposition is received or what the
probability of its being carried into effect. Meanwhile
much do the best we can, with Ed. Matthews's aid, to
bring to light the various sectarian subterfuges by which
people here have been led astray, & keep them on their
guard against scoundrels who will have the "Reporter"
all at his disposal for carrying on his manœuvres
in conjunction with his ally Lewis Tappan. He is
so full of plots & counterplots that we cannot but believe
that he will overreach himself & defeat them. The account

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Mr Mathews has received from the Agents of
the Baptist Free Mission Society of the strategists
of Seble & Tappan to get possession of Daron Institute
to circumvent its present proprietors ^{is} equal to any
trick in their conduct towards the American Society.
But probably you know all these transactions, or if not
have heard quite as much as you desire of the actors
in them. I think it is our business to see to the enemies
at home I show them to be such as best we can. The
Broad St. people are quite as hostile to L. Mathews &
the Free Mission Society as to the "infidels" & ignore
these ~~just~~ ^{just} utterly, wilfully, fabricating the most
palpable falsehoods by way of exculpation, but showing
no symptoms of repentance or amendment. This
very circumstance disposes us to fraternize with
L. Mathews's party, from its increasing our faith in
their being thorough-going. If you think us in danger
your company we shall be grateful for any facts to
keep us on our guard. You know we are very parti-
saneous in refusing to lower the Anti-Slavery Standard,
or to let the true position & claims of the American
Soc^y be disregarded, or to recognize any professed anti-slavery
organization which stands in a hostile relation to
it, as deserving its assumed characters. But, however
essential it may be with you to make the political question
a test of genuine Abolition, we are not prepared to reject
the aid of all who have not renounced political action
for it is not a mode of agitation which can ever be taken
up here, & every thing ^{appears to} depend on the connection in which
the advocacy of it stands. Your family & Mr. Thompson
treated L. Mathews in the light of an opponent, as if he

aimed to depreciate Mr Garrison's position, ~~we think~~
he only wanted to defend his own, not comprehending
Mr Thompson's sweeping declamation against all
A. S. professors apart from the Am. Soc^y. At any rate
he takes no pains to make converts to his views about
politics, but a great deal to convince people that he
& Mr Garrison are in accordance on the great church
question, & that ~~that~~ that is the secret of the unpopularity
of ^{Mr G.} the ~~foreman~~, of the complaints brought against
him of infidelity; & he shows how religious papers &
teachers are quoted here as "antislavery" whose whole course
has been to silence discussion & abuse the Abolitionists.
Dr. Dr. ^{thus he} ~~repelling~~ the sympathy he would at once
secure for his own Mission by chiming in with the
prevailing condemnation of Mr Garrison's ~~for his~~
"antichristian mode of advocacy." We have not been
hasty in accepting these evidences of L. M.'s sincerity,
for we had no prepossessions in his favor but everything
to put us on our guard against being deceived, ^{to him} & our
observations ^{of him} have been very extensive & our informa-
tion drawn from many different sources. We are ^{now} ~~only~~
making so much of this subject, ^{chiefly} to show you that right
or wrong theoretically - our machinery consists
mainly of religious organizations, & that as churches
& congregations are the instruments thro' which
united action is effected, we must not wait till Mr
Garrison has convinced us all that these things
are delusions & obsolete forms, if ~~we~~ ^{we} are to do anything
towards helping on the cause; but must turn these ^{institutions} to the
best account we can. Mr Chapman was forced to confess
after hurling a few anathemas at these relics of bye

some ages, that the Bristol people did seem as far as
her observation went, to make the best use they
could of such cumbersome objectionable mediums
of centralization, ^{for they} ~~by~~ constituting ^{action} them the main
springs of ~~acting~~ ^{concern} for the good of society.
The originators & sustainers of schools, visiting, ~~clothing~~
reading, debating, provident ~~societies~~ ^{other} institutions,
but proselyting, exclusive, contracting agencies.
But however unwieldy & fettered they may be, as I
remarked before we must effect our ends through
the medium of these organizations, & be "many
sided" like Goethe, a gift which I accord with you
in not despising. Don't think me ⁱⁿ possession of it to
such a degree as to be retreating a single step or com-
promising: I only burden you with these comments
that you may know the results of our experience
(which is really becoming somewhat extended &
comprehending a great variety of classes of mind now).
I will drag my pupils as fast as ever they can
run after me, & I hope you will think the accom-
^(It was enclosed to Mr May Dec. 12th when they were to have gone)
panying printed declaration, emanating from a
class whose utter darkness on my introduction
to them last spring I remember describing to you,
gives some signs of encouragement. They keep very
steady; but they receded some few paces in con-
sequence of Mr G. Thompson's outbreak on Mr Matthews
& became reconvinced (of what I had been laboring
by trying to disabuse them) of the fact that the
American A. S. Society ~~was~~ very intolerant of all

who hesitated at pronouncing ^{the} ~~them~~ Shibboleth
and that however great its merits & the virtue
& attractions of many of its members, & how
wide its platform - the Bristol A.S. Society
lose its independence by being nominally
identified with it. The mention of Mr Thompson
reminds me of ~~the~~ bringing in his name in a way
caused us much diversion in your letter to me -
a climax to the ^{list of} delightful associates whose presence
was likely to displace you from your acknowledged
station in our ~~affairs~~ regard. And (altho' it is perhaps
a very gratuitous piece of candor, & an uncalled for
lowering of ourselves in your estimation) any desire
to being supposed anything but what I am prompts
me to admit, that in spite of all our efforts to be of
service with you we cannot attain your pitch of
admiration of that gentleman, & feel slightly jealous
at his being exalted above Mr Webb, & the bright cluster
of Weston's & Chapman's who encircled him. We
spend so much of our time in defending Mr T. from
false accusations & in endeavoring to soften the
almost universal prejudice against him by
his generous devotion of his great talents to
unselfish ends, & in trying to extenuate minor
grievances by showing his consistent adherence to his
principles, that I have no compunctions of con-
science at making this confession; tho' being full
aware of your exalted estimate & being quite able
to account for it, I can appreciate the descent in your
favorable opinion that must accompany it. Perhaps
our own views would not have had a sufficiently
practical bearing to have induced their utterance
but we have several times feared that an impression
that the inhabitants of England regard Mr T. with your eye
^{will make you overlook the amount of influence he will exert in}

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